ENGAGE.EU
Academic Initiative Incubator

Seed Funding for Teaching Initiatives

Guidelines 2024

1. Introduction

The ENGAGE.EU Academic Initiative Incubator (the Incubator) aims to foster new collaborations in teaching and learning across institutions in the ENGAGE.EU alliance. It is an instrument for partners to develop bottom-up initiatives for new educational offers (new content or new formats) and to provide learners with high-quality international opportunities for learning.

The Incubator provides a framework to support academic teaching staff at partner universities in 1) initiating collaboration on joint educational offers, 2) developing them in a co-creation approach, and 3) rolling out such offers at select partner institutions or throughout the alliance.

The ENGAGE.EU Incubator Seed Funding scheme offers financial support to collaborative initiatives. It is a vital part of the Incubator and seeks to

- offer *incentives* to mobilise and enable academic and teaching staff in developing and implementing mission-led, innovative educational offers across our university communities
- promote the *visibility* of these collaborative efforts vis-à-vis other faculty members and teaching staff, administrative staff, and students;
- enable ENGAGE.EU members to *grow* their initiatives into sustained and scalable educational offerings and/or *leverage* the seed funding to raise additional external funds (such as Erasmus+ or other EU and national sources).

2. ENGAGE.EU Incubator Seed Funding

This document presents the guidelines defining the application requirements and allocation process for the ENGAGE.EU Incubator Seed Funding call in 2024. The guidelines may be revised for future calls.

Academic teaching staff from all nine ENGAGE.EU partner universities[1] (Hanken, Luiss, NHH, TiU, UMA, UNWE, URL, UT Capitole, WU) are invited to submit applications for the Seed Funding scheme. The Seed Funding for 2024 targets bottom-up initiatives for new academic offers in all disciplines for learners at the bachelor and master levels that meet the eligibility and selection criteria outlined below. Target groups may be revised for future calls.

Timeline for 2024 call

June 10, 2024	Call published
June 25, 2024	Online information session 1
September 12, 2024	Online information session 2
September 25, 2024	Deadline for proposals
October 30, 2024	Selection committee makes final decision
November 1, 2024	Start of funding period
October 2026	End of funding period for initiatives funded in 2024

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[1] ENGAGE.EU associate partner St. Gallen may be included as a partner in seed funding applications, but may not receive any funding from the seed funding scheme. Participation will be at own cost or funded from other sources. Please note that applications involving St. Gallen as a participating institution require approval from the St. Gallen administrative team prior to submission (see contact information in Section 6).

Spring 2025	Call #2 published
Early fall 2025	Deadline for proposals call #2
Spring 2026	Call #3 published
Early fall 2026	Deadline for proposals call #3

Initiatives selected for seed funding will receive funds to develop their initiative. Initiatives not selected for seed funding may still receive non-monetary support from the Incubator.

2.1 Formal requirements

The Incubator Seed Funding is an instrument to promote collaboration in the area of teaching and learning in ENGAGE.EU. To be eligible for funding, proposals must:
- be submitted in English within the deadline of September 25;
- be complete with all required documents;
- be related to the [ENGAGE.EU mission](#);
- be co-developed by **at least three ENGAGE.EU partner** institutions, with one partner designated as the lead applicant

The lead applicant is expected to be employed as full-time or part-time academic or teaching staff with one of the ENGAGE.EU member universities, with an employment contract lasting for the full length of the proposed initiative. Proposals may also include administrative/technical staff, to support lead applicants in the development and implementation of the proposed initiatives.

2.2 Eligible initiatives

The Incubator seed funding scheme aims to support the development of joint educational offers within the alliance. Academic teaching staff are welcome to develop entirely new teaching content, or to build on existing material that will be delivered through new, innovative and collaborative formats. Supported initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Development and implementation of joint courses, modules or other teaching units (in-person, blended or virtual)
- Development and implementation of short/intensive and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) courses
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or similar

The list above is non-exhaustive; other activities will be considered provided they clearly state how they match the scope and goals of the Seed Funding scheme detailed above.

The Incubator Seed Funding supports initiatives that contribute to the mission and goals of the ENGAGE.EU alliance. Initiatives applying for seed funding should, as far as possible, add to the total number of offers for ENGAGE.EU learners and contribute to the overall mobility numbers of the ENGAGE.EU alliance. Priority will be given to initiatives that:

- Have an interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary approach with relevance to key societal challenges.

- Promote innovative teaching models.
- Have feasible plans to be sustainable beyond the pilot.
- Are designed to have a high impact for the alliance and/or be scalable in future instalments.
- Are launch-ready by the academic year 2025/2026 or earlier

2.3 Budget and eligible costs

In the Seed Funding call for 2024, the goal is to fund 3-6 initiatives. The total amount of funding available is EUR 30.000, and individual initiatives can apply for funding up to a maximum of EUR 10.000. If there are many eligible and high-quality initiatives in 2024, the number of funded initiatives may be increased. The funding period for Seed Funding allocated in 2024 is November 2024 to October 2026.

Eligible costs

Expenses related to the initiative are eligible, provided they have been indicated in the estimated budget and incurred in connection with the development and implementation of a teaching initiative:

- Personnel costs
- Travel expenses and meeting costs
- Costs for events (venue, coffee breaks, etc)
- Software, licences
- Production of teaching materials
- Costs for relevant teacher training
- Costs related to communication and dissemination (visual materials, printing costs, etc)

Non-eligible costs

- Proofreading/translation costs
- Conference fees or similar
- Costs associated with the participation of third parties, including ENGAGE.EU associate partners or other external partners.

Applicants should reach out to their institution's Incubator contact person (see Section 6) for guidance regarding the budget before submitting their proposal. Please ensure that the expenses are eligible to be covered under the usual national and EU regulations.

Before submitting the proposal, applicants are asked to check if the planned initiative is or can be funded in another part of the ENGAGE.EU work plan[2] or by another funding source.

Multiple proposals and additional funding

Each proposal should contain one initiative. Partner institutions and individuals may be the lead applicant of multiple proposals or be part of multiple initiatives.

Additional funding (co-funding) from other sources is encouraged. Attention must be paid to the risk of double funding for initiatives seeking additional funding from Horizon Europe or Erasmus+.

Third parties such as associate partners may participate in the proposed activities. However, the cost of their participation must be covered by other funds and not be included in the Incubator Seed Funding proposal budget.

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[2] For example: ENGAGE.EU summer schools, ENGAGE.EU Expedition weeks, Study tours or similar.

2.4 Payment of funds

Following overall ENGAGE.EU procedures, no funding will be transferred directly from the Incubator to the winning initiatives. Expenses incurred during the funding period will be covered or reimbursed by each partner following local procedures. The balance of payment from the Incubator to the partners involved will be made after the submission of the final report.

The Seed Funding scheme will not cover any overspending beyond the total allocated budget. Any remaining funds at the conclusion of an initiative will be collected by the ENGAGE.EU Incubator task team and added to the seed funding pool for subsequent calls.

3. Selection process and timeline

All submitted proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria and selection process described below. Bodies involved in the evaluation and selection process are:

- The Incubator Review Team, composed of one representative from each ENGAGE.EU partner. The task coordinator for the Incubator task team is the head of the Review Team.
- The Incubator Selection Committee, comprised of the ENGAGE.EU Area Board for Learning.

The Board of Learners will be invited to have representatives in the Review Team and the Selection Committee.

3.1 Selection process

The selection process for the ENGAGE.EU Incubator Seed Funding 2024 is as follows:

- The Incubator task coordinator performs a technical review to make sure all proposals are complete and meet formal eligibility requirements (see above). Any questions or uncertainties are brought to the attention of the Review Team.
- The Review Team performs a qualitative review of the proposals, using the evaluation criteria outlined below. The evaluations of the Review Team result in a prioritized list of nominated proposals.
- The list of nominated proposals is submitted to the Incubator Selection Committee for final decision.

3.2 Evaluation criteria

All proposals will be evaluated by members of the Incubator Review Team. The team may also seek advice from external experts for the assessment of a specific proposal.

Proposals are reviewed according to the evaluation criteria and weighting below. The maximum score is 75 points.

Quality (20 points)

- The clarity of the goals and objectives of the initiative, and their alignment with ENGAGE.EU mission.
- The degree of connection to SDGs and key societal challenges.
- The degree to which the initiative has an interdisciplinary and innovative approach to teaching and learning.

Feasibility (30 points)

- Well-developed and clearly formulated work plan for development and implementation with specific milestones and a realistic timeline.
- Clear description of the division of roles and responsibilities between partners, including the competence and complementarity of the team.
- Realistic budgeting of sufficient resources for the development and implementation of the initiative.

Impact (25 points)

- The potential impact of the initiative on the broad ENGAGE.EU partnership (number of partners involved, number of faculty members involved etc).
- The number of students within the alliance expected to benefit from the initiative.
- The degree to which the initiative has a feasible plan for sustainability beyond pilot phase.
- The degree to which the initiative is scalable in future instalments.

In the case of equal ranking, funding will be granted to the project with the highest number of points under the Impact criterion. Consideration may also be given to the composition of the total portfolio of initiatives.

4. How to apply

The application should identify one lead applicant who will serve as the main point of contact for the Incubator Review Team throughout the selection process and funding period.

The Incubator contact point at each institution will be able to assist in identifying collaborators from across the alliance, as well as answer any other questions you may have about the application.

The submission of an application involves two steps:

- Inform the local Incubator contact point to let them know to expect the proposal.
- Send the completed application form to engage.eu@nhh.no, using this application form.

Please note that incomplete applications cannot be considered.

5. Reporting and dissemination

5.1 Reporting requirements

The Incubator Seed Funding comes with a requirement of two short written reports:

- Within six months after the allocation, the lead applicant must give a brief status report to the Incubator task coordinator (engage.eu@nhh.no), outlining if and how the initiative has started.
- Within 30 days after the funding period, the lead applicant is required to submit a final report on the initiative to the Incubator task coordinator (engage.eu@nhh.no). The final report should include a summary of the initiative and its activities, as well as a financial report. Templates for the final and financial reports will be provided.

Additional reports may be requested.

5.2 Dissemination

Visibility of the Incubator is key to its success. To achieve this, initiatives will be asked to be active in their communication both within and outside the ENGAGE.EU community.

- A summary of each funded initiative will be published online on the ENGAGE.EU website.
- The lead applicant is required to document the initiative with summaries of important milestones, photographs and the like.
- The information will be used for posts and stories in ENGAGE.EU social media.

The ENGAGE.EU team will be available to assist with any event or communication regarding the initiative and/or the dissemination of findings.

6. ENGAGE.EU Incubator contact points

Each ENGAGE.EU partner institution has appointed an Incubator contact point that will guide the local applicants in compiling their proposals. Please reach out to the contact point from your institution[3]:

Partner	Contact	E-mail
Hanken	Carl Hobbs	carl.hobbs@hanken.fi
Luiss	Emily Magliozzi	emagliozzi@luiss.it
NHH	Anika Seemann	anika.seemann@nhh.no
Tilburg	Guido van Leerzem	g.vanleerzem@tilburguniversity.edu
UMA	Kathrin Blitzke	kathrin.blitzke@uni-mannheim.de
UNWE	Venelin Boshnakov	venelinb@unwe.bg
URL	Joan Sabaté Salazar	joanss@blanquerna.url.edu
UT Capitole	Anthea Chai	anthea.chai-afanou@ut-capitole.fr
WU	Sophie Eberhard	sophie.eberhard@wu.ac.at

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[3] If you plan to include St. Gallen in your initiative, it is essential that you contact Karen Tinsner-Fuchs (karen.tinsner-fuchs@unisg.ch) and Peter Lindstrom (peter.lindstrom@unisg.ch) for approval prior to submitting your application.

7. Frequently asked questions

What is the Academic Initiative Incubator?

The Academic Initiative Incubator is part of ENGAGE.EU 2.0. Its aim is to promote innovative, bottom-up teaching initiatives run by academic staff of three or more partner universities.

Which universities should the partners come from?

Initiatives should involve colleagues from at least three partner universities from the ENGAGE.EU alliance (at least two other partner universities, plus yours). It is possible to include other external parties, such as ENGAGE.EU associate partner St. Gallen and associate partners from outside academia. However, please be aware that no funding can be provided through the seed funding scheme to associate partners. If you plan to include St. Gallen, please contact Karen Tinsner-Fuchs (karen.tinsner-fuchs@unisg.ch) and Peter Lindstrom (peter.lindstrom@unisg.ch) for approval applying.

How can I find collaborators in other ENGAGE.EU universities?

In order to find suitable partners for the project you can approach colleagues at partner institutions, find colleagues in your field on the ENGAGE.EU Community Platform, or contact your Incubator contact point or the institutional coordinator at your home university.

Could my project involve administrative staff only?

No. The lead applicant must be an academic or teaching staff member who is employed full- or part-time at the lead partner institution. It is expected that administrative staff are involved in order to facilitate the development and implementation of the initiative, but the main target group of the Academic Initiative Incubator are academic staff.

What travel and subsistence costs are eligible?

Travel and subsistence costs for planning meetings, teaching and guest lecturing or other activities related to the initiative is eligible. Costs already covered by the Erasmus+ programme, such as staff mobility for teaching, are not eligible. If you need more information about what format/type of mobility is funded, please contact the institutional coordinators of your universities.

What costs are not covered by the Seed Funding Scheme?

Overall, all costs must be eligible under general EU regulations. Due to limited funds, the Seed Funding Scheme cannot cover costs for the acquisition of hardware or similar investments. Similarly, costs related to conference participation are generally not covered, unless directly relevant to the initiative. This is to ensure that the Incubator can support as many initiatives as possible.

What happens if our initiative is not funded in 2024?

Further calls for seed funding will be opened up in 2025 and 2026. You may reapply. Please reach out to your local contact point for advice if you wish to submit a new application for an initiative that did not receive funding in a previous application round. In addition, the Academic Initiative Incubator offers extensive non-monetary support for academic staff developing new, innovative teaching opportunities. For more information, see here.

When should we start working on our initiative?

Applicants are encouraged to start working on their teaching initiatives as soon as possible. The funding period begins 1 November 2024 and teaching initiatives funded through the Seed Funding Scheme may be launched at any point between 1 November 2024 and 31 October 2026. Applicants are reminded to check their institutional deadlines for when new courses need to be registered by.